/49 cont./

789 To this category belong among the Pemón Indians the practice
[754] of injuring an enemy by charming his tracks; carrying water in
[513] the mouth when planting cane and invoking the poppy so that
[224] sleep will come to children; hunters making remedies with
[252] leaves similar to the ears of some animal or other so that the
[755] animal may come out to meet them; women pouring honey
[787] into cuts on their jaws so that the chewed kachirí may turn out
[787] sweet for them; believing that eating eggs will bring out boils; believing that tripping over a stone on the path is a presage that we shall meet a traveler who is coming in the opposite direction; interpreting dreams always through similarities, e.g. moriche seeds guáimaro, red kachirí for blood, the piache's song for sickness; and a thousand more which we shall not list for the sake of brevity. About this same matter, Cecil Dampier wrote: "The savage does not pray to God to send him sun or rain: he dances a dance to the sun or he croaks like a frog..., following an association of ideas."

Y. A. Bouyssonie observed that "red ocher makes one think of blood, the condition of life, and therefore is considered to be a sort of medium for conjuring death and for facilitating posthumous existence."

789 The same can be said of the use of annatto or achiote among these Indians against the oradán, maurí, and amariauk.

108. The second principle gives rise to the magical practices which are called contagious and also sympathetic. To
855 this type belong, among the Pemón Indians, the group of prac-
846 tices related to the couvade and the asarakpué, that is, having
789 to do with the birth of children and the death of our relatives. The practices and abstentions with reference to the couvade, which begin from the time of the pairing of the progenitors and continue in minuendo until the children are two or three years old, affect not only the father -- as is generally said in ethnographic treatises, but also the mother, and it is based on the belief that tiredness, sickness, /50/ malevolent influences, etc., of either of the progenitors affect -- and in a higher

*192 273 234. Drinking bout — etaripan. (A jocose suggestion was made that this is the origin of the tribal name Taurepán.)

*192 535 235. Dance (in general) — eren.

Social dances (these are more exactly characterized elsewhere):

236. parichara.

237. tukūi?. Literally "humming bird."

238. warepan.

239. warepan — müirepɐn.

240. ware.

241. katoi?.

Magic (or piache's) dances:

242. mari

243. - 244. ɛrɛmba, with several varieties according to the purpose, e.g. okōyima-ɛrɛmba, for bites and ulcers.

245. Parichara costume: as a whole — parichara-pɐn.

246. head-dress — aro?.

247. skirt — (i) maripadai (cf. maripa, No. 443, from the leaves of which the skirt is made).

*192 k. Magic and religion.

*197 [256] 248. *Medicine-man (shaman, piache) — piatsan. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) piasan. Cumanagoto (Adam) piache. This is, of course, the origin of the Venezuelan Spanish word "piache."

*192 *197 276 [254] 249. *Canaima (a sort of evil person or spirit, see section on religion) — kanaima. This word and the strange idea that it represents are practically universal among the Caribs. Williams shows beyond much doubt that our word "cannibal" comes (through Spanish) from this word and not, as has been generally accepted, from the name of the Caribs themselves.

250. *Evil spirit (personal name of a spirit) — piaima. In British Guiana piaches are called "piaiman" or "peaiman" and it is supposed that this is derived from some form of piatsan (even Williams apparently subscribes to this, quoting in Thurn to this effect without criticism). However, this is clearly the word piaima and in Kamarakoto and Taurepán, probably in Carib languages generally, piaima is an evil spirit or mythical being, a familiar of the piaches, perhaps even a sort of celestial piache, but not an actual human medicine-man. Moreover in these two dialects piaima is a name of one particular spirit, not a general term.

756 unknown to any of my informants and the piaches themselves are quite unapproachable on the subject.[173]

756 776 [787] Piaimá, a supernatural being or spirit, is said to have initiated the first piaches into their mysteries by exactly the same procedure that I have described for the earthly piache's initiation of an apprentice. He is also said now to be corporeally visible to a piache (but to no one else) and to converse with and advise the piaches. Although I lack specific information on the point, it therefore seems highly probable that the initiation involves the invocation of Piaimá and that some, at least, of the various curative procedures also involve his presence and co-operation. However this may be, it is definite that the piaches are in rapport with Piaimá and that he is for them co-operative in some degree but that for other Indians and without the intervention of a piache he is exceedingly dangerous and may appear in the guise of a savage killer. He is thus essentially evil, a devil in fact, and the piaches derive much of their power through personal acquaintance with this devil and through their ability to temper his wrath or to direct his activities into desirable channels.

The Theory of Disease.

753 Although I shall not go into detail on this subject, the Kamarakoto theory of disease is so inextricably linked with magic and religion that it must be briefly summarized. It is not now true of the Kamarakotos, as has been stated for various Indian tribes, and probably was never true that they considered quite all ailments to be supernatural in origin. The manifest relationship between insect and snake bites and their immediate effects (but of course excluding malaria and other secondary effects) is naturally recognized. All swellings and ulcers are ascribed to such causes, even when this is not correct. It is not clear to me whether an ulcer, for instance, is supposed to be due to an actual bite, unnoticed at the time, or to the bite of a supernatural insect or snake. Although there is no clear recognition of their cause, colds, constipation, indigestion, and the like (but not the fever that may arise from these) are also now considered usually to have natural causes, although in this case one cannot be [758] sure that such an opinion is not relatively recent. For these ailments believed [757] to be natural in origin spiritual remedies may nevertheless be applied, such as remedial dancing for ulcers. Physical remedies, including various herbs and infusions, are, however, in common use for them and this purely medical subject is outside the scope of my report.

Diseases for which there is no obvious physical cause, particularly fevers [754] of any sort, are considered to be wholly supernatural in origin. These are usually caused by kanaimaton (plural; singular — kanaima).

173 [see footnote on p. 328, category 116 — Analyst]

Kanaima.

754 [171] [124] [114] The concept of kanaima, common to practically all Caribs with some variations in nomenclature, is a difficult one to grasp. Despite their apparently complete willingness to do so, the Kamarakotos did not suceed in giving me any clear-cut definition of a kanaima, and this appears to have been the experience of every investigator whose interest was more than superficial and who did not jump to the conclusion that one aspect of kanaima was a complete description (almost all the literature has been summarized by Roth, and Koch-Grünberg adds interesting observations from the Taurepánes). Clearly the concept is to the Indians themselves very complex and rather vague. The basic fact is that a kanaima is hostile as such (i.e. is not a kanaima with respect to a person to whom he is not hostile) and that by supernatural means he causes almost every sort of illness and almost all deaths.

A kanaima may be a real person but he does not cause injury by physical but only by magical means and his enmity is usually secret. The Kamarakotos deny that any members of their tribe are kanaimaton, although doubtless they [648] may be such from the point of view of other tribes. Some Maquiritares are kanaimaton to the Kamarakotos and wild or bad Indians, naturally of hostile or at least foreign tribes, are generally believed to be such.

In this aspect, the activities of a kanaima are typical of human witchcraft. The Kamarakotos deny that there are, or at least that they are acquainted with, any particular spells or magical devices that are used in order to cause harm, but such a denial is inevitable since confession of such knowledge would be dangerously near confession that its possessor is a kanaima. Rather vague reports [171] suggest that such devices are known in other tribes. Thus a Taurepán told Koch-Grünberg that certain Makuchi kanaimaton placed the spit of their enemies in a tube of bamboo and used this in a magic spell to cause death, which finds exact analogies in European witchcraft. It is highly probable also that the refusal [551] [123] to reveal real names is based, at least in part, on belief that they can be used magically to harm the possessor, and the excessive caution of the Indians toward us in this respect hints that they were not quite sure that we were not kanaimaton.

[825] Some kanaimaton are animals, or animals that may appear as men, or men that may appear as animals. Here the concept falls into the world-wide wer-animal complex, but even in such a case the harm done is not, as usual with werewolves and the like, physical but only supernatural.

754 776 There is no sharp distinction between a kanaima that is a real person and one that is not. A kanaima that is believed to be a real person may not be such in fact. Thus the Kamarakotos believe that there are flesh-and-blood Indians in nearby forests who are kanaimaton, but these probably exist only in the Kamarakoto imagination. Other kanaimaton, although they appear, if at

754 all, in human guise, are recognized as being supernatural beings and not really
776 human. Others are spirits that can materialize in almost any form, and still others are wholly invisible and formless supernatural beings or even represent a supernatural influence that is hardly thought of as possessing individuality or personality. Even these indefinite distinctions hardly seem to be very clear-
771 ly present in the Indian mind. In a broader sense, kanaima is the evil princi-
778 ple of the universe and its manifestations are endlessly protean and essentially indefinable, an idea approaching the Polynesian mana (see Karsten's discussion, which, however, does not include an explicit understanding of more specific aspects of Carib kanaima).

778 Anything unexpected, a noise, a light, a branch falling, an unusual bird,
781 a sudden shadow, may be greeted with the cry of "kanaima," a word that is
822 heard constantly on Indian lips, both jokingly and fearfully. In general anything that startles them and that is not immediately explicable by some normal and expected cause is kanaima, and this is obviously related to their real fear of being startled and to their efforts to avoid startling others.

778 Even this does not exhaust the aspects of kanaima, for it includes true
754 spirit-possession. Kanaima, or a kanaima, may enter the body of a victim and remain there, notably in the chest, causing fever and eventual death unless exorcized.

755 This spirit-possession is essentially related to the duties of the piache in averting the effects of kanaimaton, for medically his most important role is that of exorcist. Fortunately no case occurred during our stay, but the general
[274] procedure was reliably outlined to me by Indian eye-witnesses. The piache makes an infusion of green tobacco in water and snuffs this until he is thoroughly "drunk." He then gives a great leap into the air and disappears. Informants have no idea where he goes, but this is always done inside a house at night with the fires low or extinguished, and one can assume that he somehow climbs in-
[352] to the rafters. After a time he reappears and sits on his bench. This bench,
[532] called murei, is unlike the ordinary bench, aponoi?, being higher and carved into animal form (Fig. 76). He holds in his hands sticks and rolls of leaves and beats time on the ground with these while he sings.[174] Soon the piache is surrounded by a ring of light. My witnesses said that this was not visible to them but only to the piache, who presumably told them that it was there. Then the kanaima appears standing on the chest of his victim and is also visible only to the piache, who asks the kanaima to abandon his prey. The kanaima's reply is told to the sufferer and if it is affirmative recovery follows within two days. If it is negative, the patient inevitably dies.

754 The Kamarakotos believe that kanaimaton have now been fairly well cleared out around Kamarata by the piaches, but that some still invade the
[824] region and that they are still common in the Gran Sabana. The favorite haunts
[361] of kanaimaton, at least around Kamarata, are the forests and this is the

174 [see footnote on p.328, category 116 - Analyst]

754 824 361 principal reason why Kamarakotos are very reluctant to build houses in the forests and hesitant about traversing them, although they do so not infrequently.

352 532 756

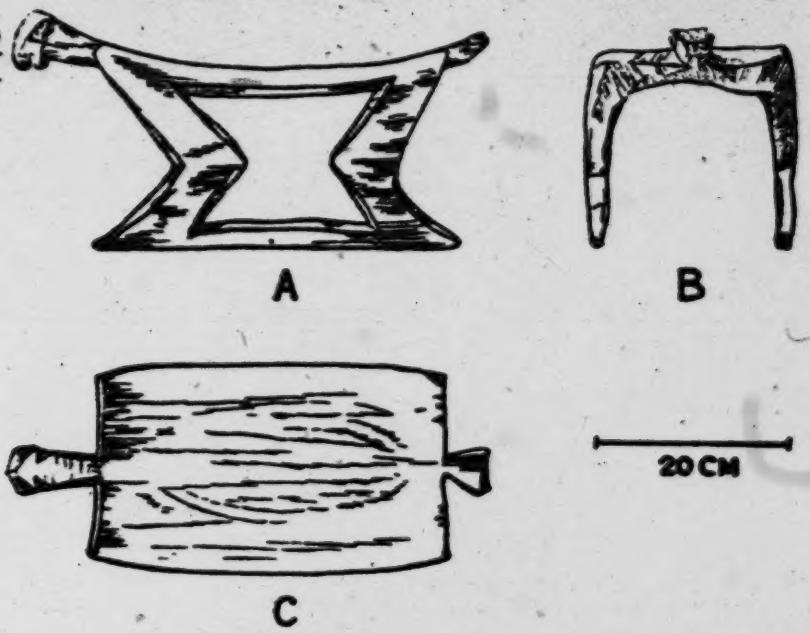

Fig. 76 — Kamarakoto Piache's Bench.
A typical murei, hewn from a single block of wood.

754 Although the kanaimatoo play an important role as the theoretical instigators of physical diseases, it is also certain that belief in them produces serious and even mortal illnesses which are wholly psychic in origin. An Indian who is physically perfectly well sometimes believes that he has been attacked by a kanaima, lies down in his hammock, and refuses to rise or to eat, lapsing into a completely listless state, withdrawing into himself, paying no attention to his surroundings, and often developing a fever. If the kanaima is not successfully exorcized, the victim will die of this primarily psychic (but of course quite real) ailment just as surely as if it were primarily physical.

754 797 [illegible] The following is not repeated as a story that I believe, for I find the alleged act of the priest quite incredible, but as one that the Kamarakotos believe and that casts a little further light on this difficult subject. They informed me that a mission priest stationed with a related tribe one day sent an Indian boy alone to an isolated conuco in the forest and then slipped around by another way and hid there. When the boy arrived, the priest shouted without showing himself. This was a mortal attack on the boy with the priest acting as kanaima

754 and the boy returned, took to his hammock, developed a high fever, and was
797 at death's door when he was finally saved by the priest's confessing his fault to
128 the boy and withdrawing the kanaima influence. I personally did not witness such a case, but some of the cases of illness related to me by the Indians appeared to involve no possible physical cause and the statements of reliable non-Indian witnesses, traveling both among the Kamarakotos and among several allied tribes, leave no doubt that such cases do really occur.[175]

Other Medical and Similar Magic.

755 Although the piache is the magician and the physician, the use of magic is not entirely confined to him. There are some spells, not the exclusive property of the piache, that can be recited by the victim and by his friends, although these apparently are not considered really effective in severe cases or cases surely involving a kanaima. Koch-Grünberg gives the texts of several such spells from the Taurepáne. Some of them are related to birth, puberty, and other critical physical events and they constitute a simple sort of medical ceremonial which has magical implications but which cannot really be called religious. The idea of invocation of supernatural beings, an essentially religious aspect that is present in the activities of the piaches, is very attenuated or quite absent in these.

755 There are also medical dances which are analogous to these simpler
535 spells and are called generically ɛremba. The most common is the okŏyima-ɛremba, "big snake medicine-dance," which is effective against real bites and against ulcers, which are theoretically believed to be bites. No special costume is worn except bead necklaces and unlike social dances the men and women dance in separate groups. The dance begins at dusk and continues until the following dawn.

751 There is also a piache's dance, called mari, which is danced by every-
635 one but led by a piache who sings and shouts. I could learn of no special religious significance for this dance but its ascription to the piache (whereas ordinary social dances are led by the cacique or any competent to?-esa?) suggests that it must have had some such particular significance originally.

535 It is probable that most dances once had some magic significance if they
789 did not definitely arise as magic or religious ceremonials. Thus the parichara
533 songs given elsewhere are in effect quite typical hunting spells. The present-
224 day Kamarakotos, however, informed me that the dances (excepting the ɛremba, of course) have for them absolutely no utilitarian, magical, or religious significance and that they are danced solely for pleasure. Certainly they are not treated as anything mystical and show no trace of true ritualism.

224 Aside from medicine, magic does not figure to any great extent in Kama-
289 rakoto life but there is some hunting magic. Typical hunting magic with a

175 [see footnote on p. 328, category 116 - Analysis]

157 522 824 384 302 because this would be a head measurement that was really worth-while. A young unmarried man taking a length of cloth for a woman's dress as part of his pay was surrounded by a crowd making robustly insulting remarks accompanied by loud guffaws in which he sheepishly joined. Even a happy surprise that is not essentially humorous, such as unexpectedly encountering a tree full of ripe "caruto" fruits (used for face paint), is an occasion for long laughter.

There are two noteworthy differences from supposedly more civilized humor, and these are decidedly in the Kamarakoto's favor: we saw no case in which a physical injury or indignity was considered funny, and crude practical jokes and the startling or frightening of anyone were expressly avoided and considered quite the opposite of humorous.

Emotional Adjustment.

171 158 In northern Venezuela we observed that most members of the peon class are definitely neurotic.[224] Most of them live oppressed by anxiety, ridden by fear of almost everything around them, and in a state of worry with few and 158 brief remissions. The opposite is true of the Kamarakotos. No neurotic individ- 157 uals or states were observed among them. Anxiety and worry seemed almost unknown, and the whole tribe exhibited a degree of emotional adjustment that 155 could not be matched in any "civilized" community of equal size. It will not be a popular statement, but scientific conscience compels me to add that the almost complete absence of a formulated religion is certainly one element in this remarkably good adjustment, just as the burden of such a religion plays a definite and large role in the neurotic anxiety of the northern peones.[225] Another element, probably the most important, is the security and care enjoyed by the children, as noted below.

152 It is not true that fear is unknown and it is apparently, but not really, contradictory that the Kamarakotos are almost free of anxiety but are often afraid and have even been known to die of fear. They do not seriously fear 828 physical injury: what they fear is fear itself. They detest being startled and often show marked consideration in avoiding giving anyone a start or surprise. Playing peek-a-boo with a baby, so common with us, was never seen and might 254 indeed be considered a serious injury. They fear the kanaima, but in their stories of danger from kanaima the injury is seldom represented as inflicted by physical means but by a noise, or similar thing, that merely startles and frightens 539 the victim. I have noted the curious and revealing fact that in their version of the widespread "stachelsitz" (spiny bench) legend, the bench is not spiny at all and the damage is inflicted by fright and not, as in almost all other known versions of this story, by physical pain.

224, 225 [see footnotes on p. 333, category 11b - Analyst]

435 172. The literature, especially that of travel as opposed to scientific study, is full of ridicule of the Indians because they do not know the intrinsic worth of articles. These statements are usually naive because they show that it is the traveler, who did not know what "intrinsic worth" means. Except for jewelry and a few other uses unknown to the Indians, gold has no intrinsic worth. In our civilization, but not that of the Indians, it has an extrinsic worth as a token of the real value that it in itself does not intrinsically have. When an Indian picks up a nugget and trades it for a needle, he gets by far the best of the bargain on the basis of intrinsic worth: he gets something that he could not make and that is of great use to him for something that cost him no real work and that is worthless to him, and so gets something for nothing. It must not be supposed, however, that there are any Indians left, even beyond the limits of intensive exploration, who do not now have a better idea than this of the value (to the traveler) of gold, or of other articles of regular trade.

114 173. Koch-Grünberg, who seems to have penetrated farther than anyone
756 else into Carib religion, gives the texts of several Taurepán magic spells, but these were apparently common property and not exclusive to the piaches.

114 174. No mention was ever made of the use of a rattle, maraka, by the
534 piache and since this is almost universal and is indeed believed by some to be
755 the primary purpose of the maraka, I feared that I had missed an essential point.
[171] I now learn, however, on Koch-Grünberg's unimpeachable authority that Taurepán piaches do not use the maraka, and this must be true also of the Kamarakotos.

● 754 175. The following remarkable incident was related to me by Marie
123 Angel as having occurred during her previous visit to the tribe. One of the boys employed at the camp was seized by a kanaima and retired to his hammock to die. All entreaties to him fell on deaf ears and Mrs. Angel finally said in his presence, through an interpreter, that if he was going to die anyway she was not going to have him do so at length in her camp, that she was going to get a gun and if he was still in his hammock when she returned, she would put him out of his misery. When she approached with the gun, the boy suddenly sprang from the hammock and ran off, entirely cured. Since Indians do certainly die from such attacks, this anecdote is not to be taken as evidence that they are feigned.

764 176. But I did not open these because this would certainly have been re-
123 sented and the friendship of the living was far more essential to my work than this slight additional knowledge of the dead.